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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

The Wisconsin Lead Region

FRONTIER COMMUNITY

James I. Clark

The State Historical Society of Wisconsin

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The Wisconsin Lead Region

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by

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THE WISCONSIN LEAD REGION

Frontier Community

by

JAMES I. CLARK

LATE IN JANUARY, 1828, the Winnebago Chief Carumna paid a visit to Joseph M. Street, Indian Agent at Prairie du Chien. The chief was worried. Lead miners had come north from the Fever River district in northwestern Illinois. They were digging and settling on land that belonged to the Winnebago. Carumna's braves were threatening to make a great deal of trouble.

"We promised not to interrupt the white people at the Fever river mines," Carumna reminded Street. "Then they were digging near the line; now a large camp has gone far into our country, and are taking lead where it is easy to be got, and where Indians have been making lead many years," he went on. "We want our Father to stop this before blood may be shed by bad men."

Street told the chief that their Great Father lived far away. He would remove those white men when he learned of the situation. The Indians had only to keep their promise and remain at peace.[1]

The Winnebago had already had serious trouble with trespassing miners. The year before, Red Bird had taken a few Indians on the warpath. Some isolated settlers had been killed. A couple of keel-boats were attacked near the mouth of the Bad Axe River, north of Prairie du Chien. It had looked like a large-scale uprising to the miners, and many had fled to places of safety. The Fever River area, an eye-witness recalled, "was crowded with families pouring in from the mines. The flat between the bluff and the river was covered with wagons, families camping in them; blockhouses were erected on the hill, companies forming, drums beating . . ."

Many miners had hastily organized and marched off to find Indians. Troops from Forts Crawford and Snelling and from St. Louis were called into action. As the regular and militia troops gathered to march on isolated Indian camps, wiser tribal heads prevailed. Red Bird was surrendered to regular troops and the "war" ended. He later died in prison, but that didn't solve the problem created by northward-moving miners.[2]

Instead of removing the miners, the Red Bird disturbance had served to make the country attractive to many more. Miners who had joined militia companies found more rich lead deposits than they did Indians. Some hung up their guns and started

A Winnebago Indian village.

digging in the area around Dodgeville and Mineral Point. Now it looked like trouble might break out all over again.

The difficulty was more easily talked about than solved. Leading the miners was Henry Dodge, who had come over from Missouri and had led a militia company against the Winnebago. He had made strikes near Dodgeville late in November, 1827, and by January had taken out more than $3,000 worth of lead. With two Negroes he was raising about 2,000 pounds a day. Not only did he have a sound investment paying off, but Henry Dodge was a hard man to move anyway.

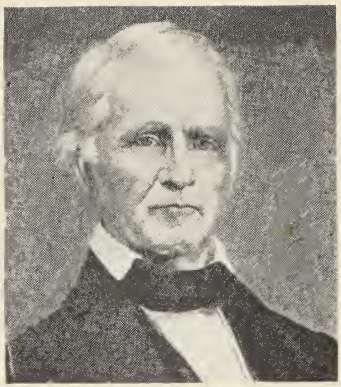
Dodge had made a bargain with the Bear, a Winnebago chief, and then sold parts of his purchase to incoming miners. As news of the deposits spread, hundreds flocked into the area. Some bought from Dodge, or went to work for him. Others started digging on their own. A few bought the right to dig from the Indians; most of them didn't.

Joseph M. Street sent a representative to the miners around Dodgeville ordering them off the Indian land. Dodge insisted that no definite lines marking off Winnebago territory had been drawn. Until that was done, the miners had the right to stay. Street reported later: "From the best information I have been able to obtain there are about one hundred and thirty men engaged in mining at this place, and completely armed with rifles and pistols." He also reported that Dodge said he would leave as soon as he conveniently could. Another report had it that Dodge said he would leave if his opponents had more guns than he.

As it turned out, there were only 130 men fit for duty in the garrison

at Fort Crawford. Lacking sufficient men, and wanting to avoid trouble anyway, Street didn't move. United States officials speeded negotiations to buy the land from the Indians.

Commissioners for the government met with some of the chiefs at Green Bay in August 1828. The following year a large council was held at Prairie du Chien. There the Winnebago surrendered their claims to the land in exchange for $18,000 and a large quantity of merchandise, all to be paid annually for thirty years. Henry Dodge turned out to be one of the treaty signers.[3]



Henry Dodge, miner, Indian fighter, governor of Wisconsin Territory.

Beginning of Mining Along the Mississippi

At that time Wisconsin was part of Michigan Territory although the mining country might well have been part of Illinois. The area around Dodgeville was part of the lead region centered at the Fever River, and the biggest settlement was at the Galena mines.

Mining along the Mississippi had its beginnings in Missouri many years before. Extensive lead deposits in what is now Washington County had been tapped off and on by Indians and French *voyageurs* [vwä-yä-zhür′] in the 1600's. Early in the next century, a group of Frenchmen began to mine systematically. Operations continued when the Spanish took over Louisiana, and by 1800 there were reported to be about 5,000 whites and 1,000 Negro slaves in the Upper Louisiana mines. In the 1770's a miner named Julian Dubuque had moved further north along the Mississippi and uncovered more deposits. Some of his men probably drifted across the river and found good digging on the Fever River. Those deposits had also been worked for some time by Indians and fur traders, but in no organized fashion.

The land in northwestern Illinois was purchased by the United States from the Sauk and Fox Indians in 1804. The line between the purchase and Winnebago territory was later placed roughly two miles north of the present southern boundary of Wisconsin. A tract five miles square was reserved from sale and a system of leases was planned for miners.

The Missouri mines continued to provide most of the nation's lead after the Louisiana Purchase. Not until the early 1820's did people become interested in the Fever River diggings. A few fur traders had established posts in that area, and Indians brought lead as well as furs to trade, but little was done besides scooping up the lead that lay on or very near the surface.[4]

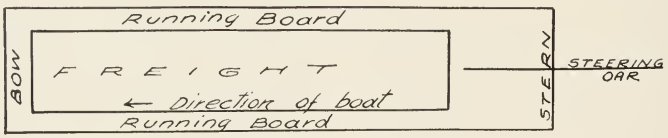
Business picked up and lead was bringing a pretty good price after the slight depression of 1819 when notices advertising Fever River leases

appeared in newspapers. One of the first to take a lease was Colonel James Johnson of Kentucky. Johnson had been in the area several years, but now in 1822 he moved into larged scale production, with plenty of tools and a number of Negro slaves.

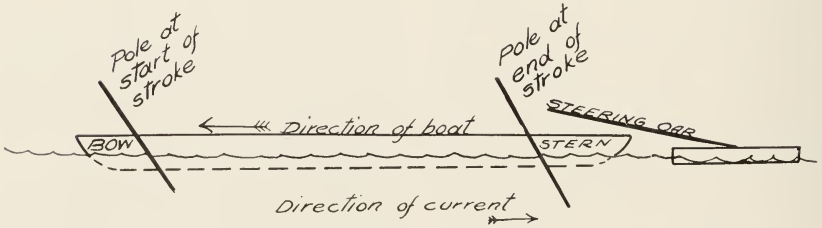
News of the rich deposits now spread rapidly. Would-be miners came from southern Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee and from Missouri. Some came overland. Others came by way of the Ohio River. Moses Meeker, for example, arrived in 1823 with a colony of forty-three men, women and children on the keel-boat *Col. Bumford*. The eighty-foot boat was packed with seventy-five tons of mining tools and equipment. It had been rowed, sailed, poled, and towed all the way from Cincinnati in just fifty-eight days, remarkably swift for the time. Meeker had the capital to go into mining, smelting, and do a little farming on the side.[5]

Many new arrivals wasted little time starting to dig. Housing was of small concern. Some people threw up rude shelters of logs, stone, even sod; others dug into the side of a hill and called it home. Some were so busy digging or looking for ore that they didn't get around to moving out of those holes for years.

Signs of previous Indian diggings led some to profitable beds of ore. Others looked for a bush called "masonic weed," supposed to have its roots in lead fifty feet below the surface. Others depended on the discovery of "float" mineral on the surface, a slight depression on the side of a hill, or a peculiar shape of a hill. The presence of a lot of ore near the surface, the crudeness of their tools, the danger of cave-ins, and the good possibilities of the vein ending in water kept most miners from digging very deep into the earth. Fifty to sixty feet down was usually the maximum shaft length.



GROUND PLAN OF KEEL BOAT



SIDE VIEW OF KEEL BOAT

When smelted, upward to 75% of the ore became lead. Furnaces constructed of brick and stone usually were built in ravines near the diggings, over a small stream if possible. The water was used to turn a wheel that worked bellows to produce intense heat. Timber for fuel was cut off the hillsides. The ore was broken into small particles and thrown on a large slanting hearth filled with charcoal and wood. As the lead melted it ran into a heated reservoir. From there it was ladled into cast-iron molds. The product was a "pig" of lead weighing seventy pounds.

As the land belonged to the government and was under the Bureau of Ordnance, an army officer was appointed superintendent of mines. He and his sub-agents had power to enforce government lease and tax regulations, and settle claim disputes among miners. Later a small detachment of troops came in to help keep law and order and see that miners didn't stray north onto Indian land.

Once the army took over, anyone wishing to dig had to obtain a permit and agree to deliver his ore only to licensed smelters. The permit allowed a man to stake off a two hundred yard square plot. If he had the money, a person could give bond for $5,000 and have the right to work 320 acres. Smelters had to give bond for $10,000 and got the right to use timber, rock, and water resources included on their grants. A federal tax of 10% of the value of all lead produced was collected from them.[6]

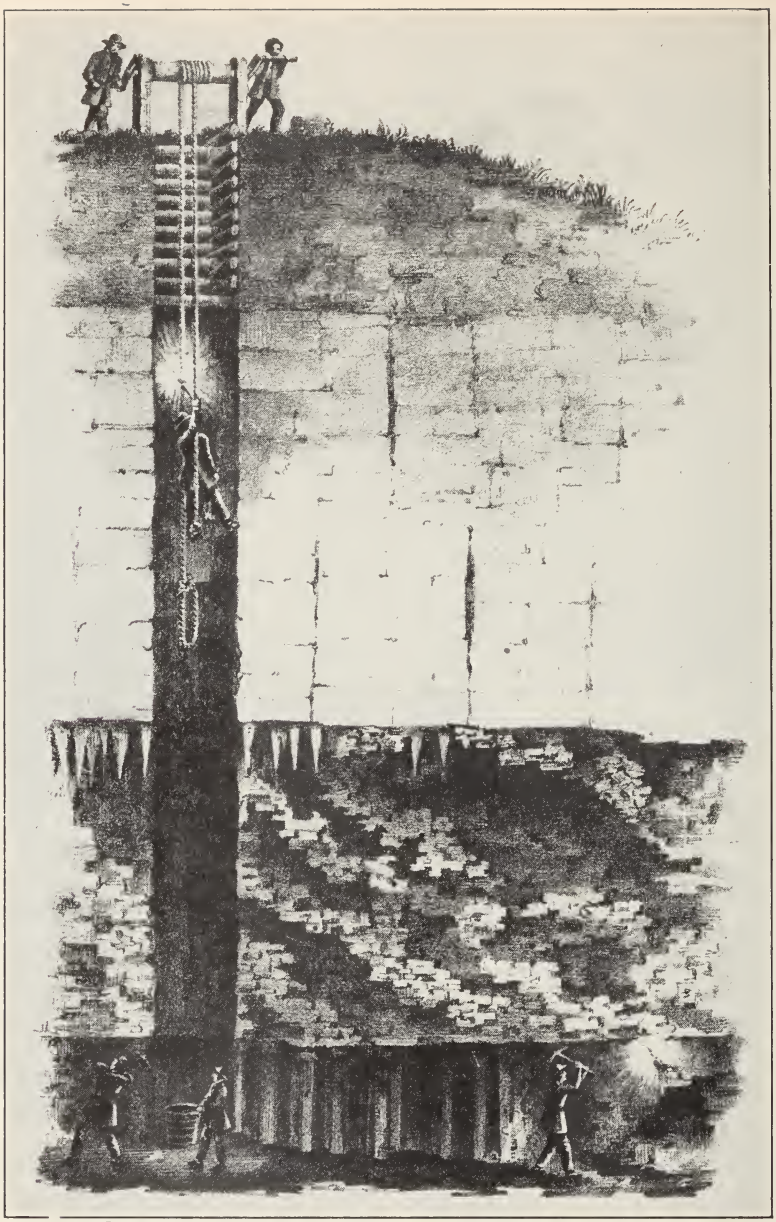
Prospecting north of the Fever River diggings had begun in 1825. First strikes were made around New Diggings and Shullsburg. Soon after that Henry and J. B. P. Gratiot began the small community of Gratiot's Grove. The Gratiots paid some Winnebago $500 in goods and supplies for the privilege of digging ore. They also furnished mining tools and credit to many of the miners flocking north. Six smelting furnaces were soon operating and three four-horse teams made regular every-other-day trips to Galena from the Grove. Indication of how well the Gratiots did can be seen in the fact that by 1836 they had turned over more than a million pounds of lead, worth $60,000, to the government. That represented 10% of the total production.

In 1826 strikes were made around Benton, White Oak Springs, and Willow Springs. The following year William S. Hamilton, son of the famous Federalist and first Secretary of the Treasury, stumbled onto a large deposit near Wiota. It became Hamilton's Diggings, and houses, a fort, and furnaces were built. The next year John H. Rountree made strikes near Platteville, and began extensive mining in that area.[7]

Lead Goes to Eastern Markets

At the smelters miners were paid from 1¼¢ to 3¢ a pound for their ore, depending on the market. At the best, three-quarters of that ore would become lead. The smelter sold the pigs for from 5¢ to 6¢ a pound during most of the 1820's.

For transportation, the lead region depended on the Mississippi, and thus established close trade relations with the South. Lead produced in Michigan Territory, which included all Wisconsin at that time, went by water or overland to Galena. Some travelled on flatboats directly to the



Cross section of a lead mine.

St. Louis market. Via steam and flat-boats the lead was carried to New Orleans. Transferred to sailing ships there, the produce from the Upper Mississippi mines found its way to eastern markets.

The manufacture of pewter, printers type, weights, shot and other products consumed some of the lead. Much of it was used to make white lead, which formed a base for paint. Until about 1730 most houses in America were innocent of paint. A hundred years before that the Reverend Thomas Allen of Charlestown, Massachusetts had got into trouble because parts of his house had been painted. Such a useless luxury was considered something in which the Devil might well have a hand. After spreading paint became socially and morally acceptable, the British government taxed the importation of red and white lead, painters colors, glass, and also added a tax on tea. Failure to remove the tax on the last item resulted in a lot of tea finding its way to the bottom of Boston harbor in 1774.

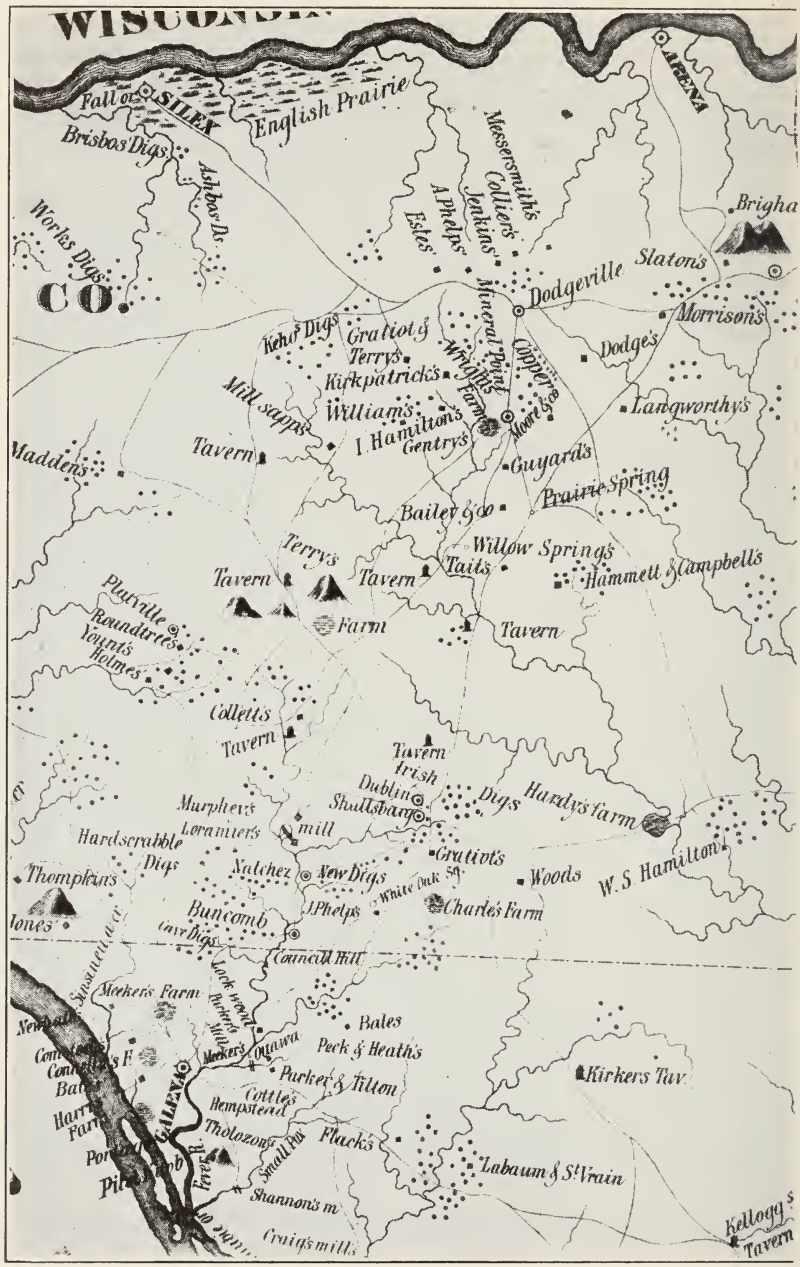
After the Revolution Massachusetts and Virginia mines partially filled the need for lead, but much paint and other products were still imported. A few enterprising businessmen noted the possibilities of cutting into the English-dominated white lead market. In 1804 Samuel Whetherill built a factory in Philadelphia. It promptly burned down, and some suspected that British competitors had been behind the fire. Four or five years later, ignoring the advice of English agents to quit the business, Whetherill rebuilt. Immediately British manufacturers cut their prices and Whetherill's future as a white lead producer looked bleak. The War of 1812 saved him. Imports were cut off and domestic industry enjoyed a few years of protection in which to get started.

The scarcity of white lead during the war pushed the price from around ten to thirty cents a pound. Profits were so good that factories went up in various eastern cities. West of the Alleghenies, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati had factories by 1815. It was from his factory in Cincinnati that Moses Meeker had gone to the Fever River district looking for new sources of supply. Impressed with the possibility of riches, he had quit manufacturing and moved to the West.

With the increased demand for white lead, inventors got to work on new and faster methods of producing the material. At the time of the War of 1812 the practice was to cast lead into sheets, roll them into spiral forms and set them in earthern pots partially filled with vinegar. Heat was applied and the vinegar vaporized. The vapor corroded and united with the lead and formed carbonate of lead, a grayish white, crusty powder. That was scraped off, ground fine between millstones, then washed, dried and sifted. Then the powder was ground into linseed oil and poured into kegs, ready for the market. When mixed with turpentine it became paint. Nothing inventors turned up was much better though, and it was much later before other methods of white lead manufacture were generally adopted.[8]

Lead Region Economics, Society and Government

Even so, a lot of paint was produced and distributed about the country, although comparatively little found its way to the lead region. A frontier community had less use for paint than did longer settled areas. Those who did want white



1829 map of the lead region. The Wisconsin river is at the top, the Mississippi on the left.

lead had to pay 10¢ to 12¢ per pound for it. Most people were content with unpainted log houses. If better building materials were desired, they had to be imported, and prices were high. Sawmills were early erected on streams, but the local timber was mostly hardwood, good for floors and beams but not for the rest of the building. Bricks sold for $3.50 to $4.00 a thousand. Imported seasoned white pine went for $26 to $30 per thousand feet.

The British sovereign, worth around $5, and the French five *franc* piece, valued at about $1.00, made up the common currency. Spanish pieces of eight, each "bit" worth 12½¢, also circulated.

Although some men might make as much as $30 a day digging ore, others were not so lucky. And not everyone mined. Common laborers made from 50¢ to $1.00 a day. Highly skilled workers like carpenters and masons might earn $3 to $4 for a long day's work.

Government policy discouraged agriculture, although it didn't entirely prevent it. Permission to farm had to be obtained from the subagent of the mine superintendent, and it was granted only if cultivating the soil didn't interfere with mining. Miners themselves didn't favor farming either. Cultivation of the land made prospecting and mining more difficult. Farming also meant the use of timber for building and fences, and that reduced the fuel supply for smelters. As a result, most food other than game and fish had to be imported. Freight prices up the Mississippi were around 4¢ a pound and that was always added to the consumer price.[9]

Those in a position to bring in a boat-load of groceries could make money. When supplies got short, prices rose. The winter of 1827–'28 caught many in the region without much food. A man named Bouthillier landed a keel-boat of general merchandise and flour and pork at Galena in the fall. None of the food was of high quality and the flour was hardened in the barrels. Chopping it out with a hatchet and sifting it loosely, Bouthillier doubled his investment, filling two barrels with the original contents of one. Flour hit $30 a barrel before the bottom dropped out of the cornered market. February turned out mild and a steamboat got through with supplies. "Suppose, by gar!" exclaimed Bouthillier. "What man tink one steamboat come up Fever river in mid de wint?"[10]

In the towns the tavern became the main center of social life. Usually the building was a one-room log affair. Sometimes it might be built high enough to allow for sleeping rooms above, though usually people had to go outside to get upstairs. A night's lodging could be had for 12½¢, and meals were 37½¢. It cost 50¢ to bed a horse, but it could be fed for 25¢.

In the tavern after a hard day in the mines and on Saturday miners found relaxation. A card game of faro, euchre, poker, or seven-up could be found most any time. In the summer, when the crowd got too big, it often moved outside to the shady side of the building. There someone might happen along with a pair of wolves and a good fight would be staged. Or perhaps a wolf and a few dogs would be matched. Watching

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horse races also occupied the leisure hours. Most taverns had bowling alleys, where a wooden ball about a foot in diameter was rolled at ten large pins.

There was a fair amount of rough and tumble stuff among the miners, when spirits got high and things got dull. Knifings, shootings, and plain knock-down, eye-gouging fights were not uncommon. The loss of an eye or a broken limb occasionally marked the end of a good brawl. The influence of Southerners could be seen in the occasional application of the "code of honor." Sometimes the results were tragic, and a funeral then resulted.

There was, of course, more genteel entertainment too. During the winter of 1827–'28, for example, there were ten or twelve balls in Galena. A particularly large one was held on February 22. In a log tavern sixty feet long, decorated inside with evergreen boughs, sixty elegantly dressed ladies and ninety gentlemen danced till early in the morning. Such an affair also illustrated the persistent shortage of women which usually existed in the frontier society.

Occasions like the Fourth of July called for public celebration. A leading figure of the settlement delivered an oration and there was plenty of dancing, fun, and fireworks for all. The miners with their uncut hair, red flannel shirts and heavy boots mingled freely with the more polished gentlemen. Miners' wives, some smoking corncob pipes, were at ease for a time among the more well-to-do, better dressed ladies.[11]

As towns grew and people acquired an interest in a settled life, organized religion and schools appeared. An occasional itinerant preacher or a man selling religious books had come through before, but their stays were short and their influence slight. The first resident minister at Galena arrived in 1829 after forty-five residents had subscribed $430 to pay him a year's wages. The first church was a newly-constructed frame house which had the hard ground as a floor. A platform was raised at one end and people sat on what was handy. The first Sunday School was held in July that year, but many had to be taught to read before concentrating on religion.

A day school began in Galena in December, 1829. It cost each pupil $3.50 for the three month session. Each one also had to bring a share of wood to heat the building. A school of eight pupils is reported to have started in Mineral Point that same year.

During the winter the settlements were isolated. The rivers froze, snow was deep, and the weather cold. Mail arrived infrequently; two deliveries during the winter was a good average. During those months little was heard from the sixty or seventy inhabitants of the little village of Chicago, eighty miles to the east, or from St. Louis, with 1,500 people the largest town in the West, about three hundred miles away.[12]

The Illinois Legislature established Jo Daviess County in 1827 and the Fever River Diggings officially became Galena, named after the kind of lead mined there. The northern boundary of the county ran about two miles north of what is now Shullsburg, Wisconsin. That area was included as part of a voting precinct of the newly-formed town. Because

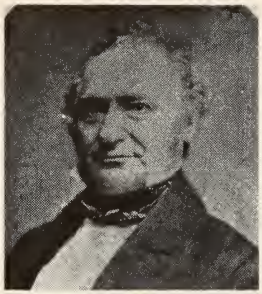
Wisconsin as part of Michigan Territory.

no boundary line had yet been definitely drawn, however, people didn't know whether they lived in Illinois or the Territory of Michigan.

By October, 1829, the 1,500 people living north of Jo Daviess County were considered enough for a new county and the question was settled. Crawford County was divided and Iowa County, Michigan Territory, was formed. Iowa included the land south of the Wisconsin and west of a line from Illinois to the portage of the Fox–Wisconsin, with the Mississippi as the western boundary. Until Grant County was formed from the western part in 1836, Iowa retained its large size.

A circuit-riding judge was the main connection Crawford and Iowa Counties had with the Michigan Territorial government. James D. Doty, later one of the governors of Wisconsin Territory, was the judge for several years. He made annual trips from Green Bay to Prairie du Chien and the lead region. His first court case in Iowa County came up early in 1830. The court assembled at Helena, the new county seat on the Wisconsin river, but there was no jury. There weren't enough people around Helena to get one together. The court adjourned and selected Mineral Point as the center of the county and proceeded with the trial at that place.

Generally, though, miners stayed out of serious trouble. A man's claim was usually respected whether he was there to enforce it or not. Those who got out of bounds were swiftly dealt with, court or no court. A strong right arm settled many arguments. Petty thievery was frowned on, and sometimes punished by the miners with whippings. If a miner became hard-pressed by would-be claim jumpers he might find a well-built individual with a good reputa-



James D. Doty, territorial judge, later governor.

tion and give him a "fighting interest" in the claim. Such a private army might not dig or haul ore, but it was always ready to repel invasion when trouble came.[13]

The organization of government didn't directly affect the institution of slavery, which existed in the lead region even though it was illegal under the Northwest Ordinance. It is hard to say just how many slaves worked in the mines. The United States Census of 1830 listed thirty-six Negro slaves and thirty-three free Negroes in Jo Daviess County. In Crawford County that year only six Negroes were reported, all free. Other reports have listed a varied number of slaves in the entire region. Some owners freed their Negroes and then contracted them as indentured servants for one or more years. A document was entered in the court records such as:

> Abner Field to Cherry—Know all men by these presents, that I, Abner Field, do by these presents release and free an indentured woman of color now belonging to me known and called Cherry alias Chaney, on condition that she, the said woman, will serve me for one year from the date of this writing, and permit herself to be taken to Kentucky or elsewhere by my giving bond and security for her return.
>
> In testimony of the foregoing, I hereto set my hand and seal this 27th day of April, 1830.
>
> Recorded June 30, 1830.
>
> Abner Field (seal)

Many people freed their slaves outright. The arrival of more and more free laborers into the region guaranteed the doom of the institution anyway.[14]

Depression Comes to the Region

At the end of the 1820's a depression hit the lead region. The 1828 production amounted to about twelve million pounds, and sold for around 5¢. At the same time, the United States imported more than that, which added to all the domestic production put almost thirty-one million pounds on the market. The country couldn't use that much. The price fell and by 1829 was down to little more than one cent per pound, while selling in the east for between three and four cents. The miners' ore was worth much less.

When ore sold for less than a cent a pound it took a lot of digging to buy the necessities of life. As a result lead production decreased by only a few hundred pounds. Much trade was carried on by barter. The Galena *Miner's Journal,* for example, offered subscriptions for lead or cash, but would also take hay, corn, potatoes, turnips, cabbage and beets, if delivered before freezing weather.

Early in 1830 the tax on lead was dropped to 6%. That didn't help much. Lead prices got up to 2¢ in February that year, but soon slipped back to 1¾¢ and below. Many

miners took to farming, in spite of prohibitions, and the depression helped to make the economy of the region more varied. Farmers found a ready market for all the food they could produce.

The system of leasing and collecting taxes on lead began to weaken. The expansion into Indian land had spelled the beginning of the end of tax collection, and the depression helped it along. When money got scarce, people were less and less willing to pay those taxes. Protests against them grew and agitation for the government to sell the land began among the residents.

At best the leasing system didn't work well. Many miners didn't bother to get permits, and too often government officials were unable to enforce the law. As the ore from Indian land came to smelters it finally occurred to someone that the federal government was collecting taxes on lead mined from land it didn't own. After the ore was smelted it was hard to prove where it had come from, and the army detachment wasn't large enough to check each load.

The opening of a land office at Mineral Point also helped bring leasing to an end. Although any land containing lead couldn't be sold, government officials often had difficulty deciding just which land contained ore. A good strike might end quickly and land that showed no signs of mineral might prove to be very rich. Finally officials accepted a sworn statement that the buyer had found no signs of lead on acreage he had chosen. That system wasn't foolproof. It was reported that some customers were blindfolded and led around the land, and could then claim with clear conscience that they had seen no evidence of mineral.

Payment of federal taxes and rents gradually ceased. An attempt to enforce the laws was made in 1840, but little came of it. Finally in 1847 the government legalized the sale of all land in the region.[15] And when the sale was announced, a poet on the Lancaster *Wisconsin Herald* wrote:

New Diggings, Shake Rag, Benton, Snake
Are all on hand and wide awake;
Black Jack, Black Leg, Swindler's Ridge
Claim with the rest their privilege.
Franklin is there and Centreville
Crawls from its elevated hill.
Dodgeville, Shullsburg, Hamilton
Are there to see to number one.
Burlesqueburgh, Platteville, White Oak, Whig,
Scrabble, the Little Patch and Big,
Red Dog, Pin Hook, Nip and Tuck,
Are all on hand to try their luck.
Beetown and Pigeon thither fly,
. . . And last, and least inclined to nab
Her share of mineral lands, is Grab.

By 1832 the depression had lifted. In May of that year miners, smelters and merchants were back on a cash basis. Mines, sawmills, and gristmills were once again producing for an expanding market.

"Education is encouraged and promoted," boasted the *Miner's Journal*. "Justice is regularly administered . . . The people of Galena are generally well-dressed, polite and sociable, and if there is a place where a respectable stranger finds pure, unalloyed hospitality, it is at the Upper Mississippi lead mines."[16]

Wisconsin's first territorial capitol, at Belmont in La Fayette County. Now a restored historic site.

Lead Region Influence in Wisconsin

Those words reflected the good times of the entire region. The Black Hawk War in 1832 interrupted the prosperity of the mines, but only momentarily. When the disturbance was settled, and the Indians permanently moved out of the area, production soon regained its previous high level. The towns of Dodgeville and Mineral Point were growing steadily and the opening of land offices served to attract more farmers.

First territorial seal.

Certain common interests gave the people in the lead region a political solidarity and influence that other Wisconsin regions didn't possess during the territorial period. The lakeshore region, the only other one with much strength at the time, suffered from rivalry between lake port towns competing for immigration and for the trade of the inland areas. At the same time, that region had a more varied economy than did the lead region, so what was good for one group might not be favored by another one.

The lead region gave strong support to Jacksonian Democracy, one example perhaps of the Southern influence there. However, those frontier Democrats were as interested in internal improvements and high tariffs—at least on lead—as any Whigs

were. The importance of lead to the area gave the people common economic problems. Having had Indians as a common enemy also brought the region together and set it off from other regions that hadn't experienced that problem. The presence of the Mississippi as a principal transportation route, even though it had low water stages that injured the region, was another thing that helped mold the lead area into a pattern of development different from other parts of the territory.

Principal representative of the lead region in politics was Henry Dodge. An honest, rough and ready sort of man who often wore knives and pistols as casually as other men wore hats, Dodge had proved himself dependable in any emergency. He had been a leader of frontier militia during the War of 1812, and had mined lead with his father in Missouri before coming to Wisconsin. During both the Winnebago and Black Hawk conflicts he led volunteer army groups. Dodge was a shrewd politician and had wide influence in the entire territory as well as in his home region. Because he had experienced their problems, he understood the miners' viewpoint and was well-qualified to speak for them. A frontier product, he was a good representative of the territory in the Congress and at other times an able territorial governor.

> Should savage warfare be forgot,
> And ne'er again appear,
> With hands upon our bosoms put,
> We'll say Dodge shall live here!

ran a ditty popular in the mining region, so highly was Dodge regarded.[17]

For six of the twelve territorial years the region furnished the delegate to Congress. It provided the governor of Wisconsin Territory for eight of those years. Henry Dodge was the Congressional delegate from 1841 to 1845, and served a total of

Sketch of territorial (later state) capitol at Madison, built in 1838.

Second territorial seal.
Compare this with first one.

eight years as governor, from 1836 to 1841 and from 1845 to 1848. He then represented Wisconsin in the United States Senate until 1857. Whig governor James D. Doty had the office from 1841 to 1844, when the Democrat Nathaniel P. Tallmadge was appointed.

Twenty-three per cent of the total number of representatives in the first Territorial Legislature in 1836 came from the southwestern part of Wisconsin. Two years later the proportion had risen to 28%. The region had enough population and influence to have the first capital located at Belmont. There were other important factors in the selection of a permanent capital, such as the lobbying of James D. Doty, who owned much of the land around Madison. Yet the final choice in a sense represented a compromise between the lead region and the lakeshore.

A number of elements tended to make for change in the area. More farmers than miners were attracted after land sales opened in 1834. Gradually dependence on the Mississippi and imported food was relieved. Those farmers at the same time had things in common with farmers in other parts of the territory. Increased immigration also brought a Yankee element that hadn't been much in evidence before and thus the earlier Southern influence was balanced. In the early 1830's the "Cousin Jacks" from Cornwall, England, began to arrive —a group that was hard-working, thorough and thrifty, and which was to leave a permanent memorial on Shake Rag Street in Mineral Point. Other foreign immigrants came in. The character of the people, as well as the economy, was starting to be more varied.

In the 1830's many immigrants followed the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes to the West. The towns and farming areas on and near the lakeshore in many cases got first chance at immigrants, thus increasing the population of that region over the lead region. The lake ports were to grow rapidly and become funnels through which many Wisconsin products were sent east. Use of those ports attracted both miners and farmers in the southwestern part of the territory. Routes across the territory promised to remove the handicap imposed on the lead region by periodic low water on the Mississippi. Increasing agricultural surpluses and a gradual decline in lead production which lessened the miners' buying power also caused farmers of the region to give increased consideration to transportation to Lake Michigan. Adequate means for transportation eastward weren't worked out during the territorial period, however,

Cornish miner's house on Shakerag Street, Mineral Point.

although there was much talk and effort on improving roads and there was agitation for railroads and canals to cross the territory.

By the time Wisconsin achieved statehood in 1848 other regions had outdistanced the lead area in population. The proportion of representatives from there dropped to 18%. In 1836, of the 11,000 people in Wisconsin, 5,000 of them lived in Grant and Iowa Counties. Ten years later, those two counties had 27,000 of the total 155,000 people in the territory. Still, the lead region was influential enough to furnish Wisconsin's first state governor, Nelson Dewey of Grant County.[18]

The region had given a distinct flavor to the beginnings of Wisconsin. It had been the main attraction for early immigration and had furnished large quantities of an important product for the national economy. Considerable leadership in the formation of the territory and in early statehood came out of the southwest corner. There Black Hawk and his warriors had made the last important Indian stand against westward-moving white civilization east of the Mississippi. When a state flag was designed, it was natural that a representation of two miners and their tools should have a place on it. And although they didn't know it, those miners who were too impatient to build houses and burrowed like badgers into sides of hills instead, gave the state its nickname.

NOTES

[1] Quoted in William Salter, "Henry Dodge," *Iowa Historical Record,* 5:337–61 (Oct., 1889), 350–51.

[2] Adele P. Gratiot, "Narrative," State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Collections,* 10:269–71; Moses Strong, "Indian Wars of Wisconsin," *Ibid.,* 8:53–65; Louis Pelzer, *Henry Dodge* (Iowa City, 1911), 41–45.

[3] Salter, "Henry Dodge," 351; Morgan L. Martin, "Narrative," State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Collections,* 11:396–98.

[4] Background material from Henry R. Schoolcraft, *View of the Lead Mines of Missouri* (New York, 1819), 15–17; Reuben G. Thwaites, "Notes on Early Lead Mining in the Fever (or Galena) River District," State Historical Society of Wisconsin *Collections,* 13:279, 285.

[5] Moses Meeker, "Early History of the Lead Region of Wisconsin," State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Collections,* 6:271–96; Joseph Schafer, *The Wisconsin Lead Region* (Madison, 1932), 33–37.

[6] Schafer, *Lead Region,* 94–97; *History of Jo Daviess County* (Chicago, 1878), 252–53, 261–63.

[7] *History of La Fayette County* (Chicago, 1881), 437–38; Sylvan J. Muldoon, *Alexander Hamilton's Pioneer Son* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1930), 33–49.

[8] Material on white lead from John L. Bishop, *History of American Manufactures* (3 vols., Phila., 1868), 1:208–09; 407; 2:35, 134, 213; William H. Pulsifer, *Notes for a History of Lead* (New York, 1888), 318–20, 322–23; Schoolcraft, *View,* 138.

[9] *History of Jo Daviess County,* 257; Schafer, *Lead Region,* 30, 42, 132.

[10] *History of Jo Daviess County,* 254.

[11] *History of La Fayette County,* 458–59; Gratiot, "Narrative," 266–67.

[12] Galena *Miner's Journal,* September 26, December 15, 1829; *History of Iowa County,* 471.

[13] *History of Jo Daviess County,* 295–96; *History of Iowa County,* 508–09; *Miner's Journal,* December 22, 1829, October 30, 1830.

[14] *History of Jo Daviess County,* 321.

[15] On the depression and leasing, *Ibid.,* 257; *History of Iowa County,* 494–95; *History of La Fayette County,* 417–20, 460–61; Schafer, *Lead Region,* 42; *Miner's Journal,* various issues, 1829–30.

[16] *Miner's Journal,* May 5, 1832.

[17] Quoted in Joseph Schafer, "Sectional and Personal Politics in Early Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Magazine of History,* 18:442–65 (June, 1935), 452.

[18] On lead region political influence, Schafer, *Lead Region,* 57;91.

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Joseph Schafer, *The Wisconsin Lead Region* (Madison, 1932), is the best and most complete treatment of the area up to the 1930's.

Biographies of lead region men include Louis Pelzer, *Henry Dodge* (Iowa City, 1911); Sylvan J. Muldoon, *Alexander Hamilton's Pioneer Son* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1930); and Kenneth W. Duckett, *Frontiersman of Fortune: Moses M. Strong of Mineral Point* (State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 1955). Alice E. Smith, *James Duane Doty, Frontier Promoter* (Madison, 1954), published by The State Historical Society of Wisconsin is good for a view of an interesting man, and the territorial period generally.

Black Hawk and his war have been much written about. Some books for easy reading which involve a good deal of fiction as well as some historical fact are August Derleth, *The Country of the Hawk* (New York, 1952), also as Aladdin book; Frank L. Beals, *Chief Black Hawk* (Chicago, 1943); and H. L. Risteen, *Black Hawk's Warpath* (New York, 1950).

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